UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
3 1761 01681590 4

The National Intelligencer and its editors

PN
4900
N3N3

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/nationalintelli00unknuoft

2774

THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER AND ITS EDITORS

[Excerpt from the Atlantic,

October, 1860]

42458/1
13.6.44

PN
4900
N3N3

LE.H
N 2774

say *supposed*, because of their origin there was no trace. All that was known about them was, that they were the sole survivors of a train of emigrants, attacked and murdered by the Nez-Percés, who, actuated by one of those whims characteristic of the red men, spared the lives of the two children, and adopted them into the tribe. Subsequently, in a skirmish with the Blackfeet, they fell into the hands of the latter, among whom they had lived for some time, when they were ransomed by the missionaries, at the price of certain trading-privileges negotiated by the latter for the tribe.

When adopted by the Jesuits, the children had lost all remembrance of their parentage; nor had they any names except the Indian ones bestowed upon them by their captors. The good fathers christened them, however, arranging them alphabetically, by the names of Alixe and Bloyse, and confiding them to the especial charge of the wife of a trader connected with the station, who had no family of her own. They were fair-haired children, probably of German or Norwegian origin, and had grown up to be robust young women of seventeen, when Walker saw them for the first time, as he stopped at the Dalles on his way from Fort Nez-Percés, about one hundred and twenty-five miles higher up the Columbia.

Walker, whose business detained him for some time at the mission, decided upon marrying one of the fair-haired sisters, — he did not much care which, they were so singularly alike. Alixe happened to be the one, however, to whom he tendered a share in his fortunes, which she accepted in the random manner of one to whom it was of but little consequence whether she said "Yes" or "No." Bloyse would have followed him, and him only, to the end of all; but he never knew it at the right time, though the women of the fort could have told him.

It was late one afternoon when he was married to Alixe, in the chapel of the mission. That was the night of the massacre. Two hours after the wedding, the Blackfeet, combined with some allied tribe, came down like wolves upon the fort. There was treachery, somewhere, and they got in. In the thick of the fight, and when all seemed hopeless, Walker shot down a tall Indian who was dragging his bride away to where the horses of the tribe were picketed. In a second he had leaped upon a horse, and, holding the young girl before him, galloped away in the direction of a stream running into the Columbia, — a stream of fierce torrents, navigable only at one place, and that by flat-bottomed boats or scows, in which passengers warped themselves across by a grass rope stretched from bank to bank. Once over this river, he could easily reach a friendly camp, where he and his bride would have been in safety.

The moon had risen when he reached the ferry. Turning the horse adrift, he lifted the young woman into the scow, and began to warp rapidly across by the rope with one hand, while he supported his fainting companion close to him with the other. Suddenly, a sharp click sounded from the opposite bank: the rope gave way, and Walker and his companion were precipitated violently into the water, the boat shooting far away from beneath their feet. It ran a strong current there, culminating in a furious rapid not two hundred yards lower down. Retaining his grasp of the young woman, Walker fought bravely against the stream, down which he felt they were sweeping, faster and faster, until a violent concussion deprived him, for a moment, of consciousness. When he came to himself, he was still swimming, but his companion was gone. The current had driven them forcibly against a rock, throwing her from his grasp. The wild rapid was just below them. She was never heard of again; but Walker managed to reach the shore, where he must have lain long in an exhausted condition, for it was daylight when he awoke to any recollection of what had happened.

The ferry-rope had been cut, as he afterwards discovered, by an Indian, in

whose brother's removal by hanging he had been instrumental, and who had been watching him, day and night, for the purpose of wreaking a bitter vengeance.

Returning to reconnoitre, with some of his friends, Walker found the mission a heap of ruins,— blackened walls, charred rafters, and unrecognizable human remains.

Long afterwards, he learned that his bride was again living among the Blackfeet;— for it was Bloyse, and not Alixe, with whom he had galloped away to the fatal ferry, in the confusion of that terrible night. It was poor Bloyse who went away from his arms down those crushing rapids. It was Alixe, his bride, who shot back the bolts for the entrance of the Blackfeet. She was secretly betrothed in the tribe, and it was her betrothed whom Walker shot down as he was rushing away in triumph with his supposed *fiancée* of the pale-faces. She married another Indian of the tribe, however; for she was a savage woman at heart, and could live among savages only.

"Sisters may be as like as two walnuts, to look at," said the old *voyageur*, when he had finished his narration. "Take any two walnuts from a heap, at random, though, and, like as not, you'll find one on 'em all heart and the other all hollow."

"True," replied I; "but these be wild adventures for one whose boyhood was passed in a peaceful and thoroughly whitewashed home on the banks of the St. François."

"'Guess they be," said the old *voyageur*.

THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER AND ITS EDITORS.

The families of Gales and Seaton are, in their origin, the one Scotch, the other English. The Seatons are of that historic race, a daughter of which (the fair and faithful Catherine) is the heroine of one of Sir Walter Scott's romances. It was to be supposed that they whose lineage looked to such an instance of devoted personal affection for the ancient line would not slacken in their loyalty when fresh calamities fell upon the Stuarts and again upset their throne. Accordingly, the Seatons appear to have clung to the cause of their exiled king with fidelity. Henry Seaton seems to have made himself especially obnoxious to the new monarch, by taking part in those Jacobite schemes of rebellion which were so long kept on foot by the lieges and gentlemen of Scotland; so that, when, towards the close of the seventeenth century, the cause he loved grew desperate, and Scotland itself anything but safe for a large body of her most gallant men, he was forced, like all others that scorned to submit, to fly beyond the seas. Doing so, it was natural that he should choose to take refuge in a Britain beyond the ocean, where a brotherly welcome among his kindred awaited the political proscript. It is probable, however, that a special sympathy towards that region which, by its former fidelity to the Stuarts, had earned from them the royal quartering of its arms and the title of "The Ancient Dominion," directed his final choice. At any rate, it was to Virginia that he came,— settling there, as a planter, first in the county of Gloucester, and afterwards in that of King William. From one of his descendants in a right line sprang (by intermarriage with a lady of English family, the Winstons) William Winston Seaton, the editor, whose mother connected him with a second Scotch family, the Henrys,— the mother of Patrick Henry being a Winston. These last had come, some three

generations before, from the old seat of that family in its knightly times, Winston Hall, in Yorkshire, and had settled in the county of Hanover, where good estates gave them rank among the gentry; while commanding stature, the gift of an equally remarkable personal beauty, a very winning address, good parts, high character, and the frequent possession among them of a fine natural eloquence, gave them as a race an equal influence over the body of the people. In William (popularly called Langaloo) and his sister Sarah, the mother of Patrick Henry, these hereditary qualities seem to have been particularly striking; so that, in their day, it seemed a sort of received opinion that it was from the maternal side that the great orator derived his extraordinary powers.

The Galeses are of much more recent naturalization amongst us,—later by just about a century than that of the Seatons, but alike in its causes. For they, too, were driven hither by governmental resentment. Their founder, (as he may be called,) the elder Joseph Gales, was one of those rare men who at times spring up from the body of the people, and by mere unassisted merit, apart from all adventitious advantages, make their way to a just distinction. Perhaps no better idea of him can be given than by likening him to one, less happy in his death, whom Science is now everywhere lamenting, — the late admirable Hugh Miller. A different career, rather than an inferior character, made Joseph Gales less conspicuous. He was born in 1761, at Eckington, near the English town of Sheffield. The condition of his family was above dependence, but not frugality.

Be education what else it may, there is one sort which never fails to work well: namely, that which a strong capacity, when denied the usual artificial helps, shapes out to its own advantage. Such, with little and poor assistance, became that of Joseph Gales, obtained progressively, as best it could be, in the short intervals which the body can allow to be stolen between labor and necessary rest. Now the writer is thoroughly convinced, that, after this boy had worked hard all the day long, he never would have sat down to study half the night through, if it had not been a pleasure to him. In short, no sort of toil went hard with him. For he was a fine, manly youngster, cheerful and stalwart, one who never slunk from what he had set about, nor turned his back except upon what was dishonest. He wrought lightsomely, and even lustily, at his coarser pursuits; for, in that sturdy household, to work had long been held a duty.

Thus improving himself, at odd hours, until he was fit for the vocation of a printer, and looked upon by the village as a genius, our youth went to Manchester, and applied himself to that art, not only for itself, but as the surest means of further knowledge. Of course he became a master in the craft. At length, returning to his own town to exercise it, he grew, by his industry and good conduct, into a condition to exercise it on his own account, and set up a newspaper, — "The Sheffield Register."

Born of the people, it was natural that Joseph Gales should in his journal side with the Reformers; and he did so: but with that unvarying moderation which his good sense and probity of purpose taught him, and which he ever after through life preserved. He kept within the right limits of whatever doctrine he embraced, and held a measure in all his political principles, — knowing that the best, in common with the worst, tend, by a law of all party, to exaggeration and extremes. Beyond this temperateness of mind nothing could move him. Thus guarded, by a rare equity of the understanding, from excess as to measures, he was equally guarded by a charity and a gentleness of heart the most exhaustless. In a word, it may safely be said of him, that, amidst all the heats of faction, he never fell into violence, — amidst all the asperities of public life, never stooped to personalities, — and in all that he wrote, left scarcely an unwise and not a single dishonest sentence behind him.

Such qualities, though not the most forward to set themselves forth to the public attention, should surely bring success to an editor. The well-judging were soon pleased with the plain good sense, the general intelligence, the modesty, and the invariable rectitude of the young man. Their suffrage gained, that of the rest began to follow. For, in truth, there are few things of which the light is less to be hid than that of a good newspaper. "The Register," by degrees, won a general esteem, and began to prosper. And as, according to the discovery of Malthus, Prosperity is fond of pairing, it soon happened that our printer went to falling in love. Naturally again, being a printer, he, from a regard for the eternal fitness of things, fell in love with an authoress.

This was Miss Winifred Marshall, a young lady of the town of Newark, who to an agreeable person, good connections, and advantages of education, joined a literary talent that had already won no little approval. She wrote verse, and published several novels of the "Minerva Press" order, (such as "Lady Emma Melcombe and her Family," "Matilda Berkley," etc.,) of which only the names survive.

Despite the poetic adage about the course of true love, that of Joseph Gales ran smooth: Miss Marshall accepted his suit and they were married. Never were husband and wife better mated. They lived together most happily and long,—she dying, at an advanced age, only two years before him. Meantime, she had, from the first, brought him some marriage-portion beyond that which the Muses are wont to give with their daughters,—namely, laurels and bays; and she bore him three sons and five daughters, near half of whom the parents survived. Three (Joseph the younger, Winifred, and Sarah, now Mrs. Seaton) were born in England; a fourth, at the town of Altona, (near Hamburg,) from which she was named; and the rest in America.

To resume this story in the order of events. Mr. Gales went on with his journal, and when it had grown quite flourishing, he added to his printing-office the inviting appendage of a book-store, which also flourished. In the progress of both, it became necessary that he should employ a clerk. Among the applicants brought to him by an advertisement of what he needed, there presented himself an unfriended youth, with whose intelligence, modesty, and other signs of the future man within, he was so pleased that he at once took him into his employment,—at first, merely to keep his accounts,—but, by degrees, for superior things,—until, progressively, he (the youth) matured into his assistant editor, his dearest friend, and finally his successor in the journal. That youth was James Montgomery, the poet.

On the 10th of April, 1786, Mrs. Gales gave birth, at Eckington, their rural home, to her first child, Joseph, the present chief of the "Intelligencer."* Happy at home, the young mother could as delightedly look without. The business of her husband throve apace; nor less the general regard and esteem in which he was personally held. He grew continually in the confidence and affection of his fellow-citizens; endearing himself especially, by his sober counsels and his quiet charities, to all that industrious class who knew him as one of their own, and could look up without reluctance to a superiority which was only the unpretending one of goodness and sense. Over them, without seeking it, he gradually obtained an extraordinary ascendancy, of which the following is a single instance. Upon some occasion of wages or want among the working-people of Sheffield, a great popular commotion had burst out, attended by a huge mob and riot, which the magistracy strove in vain to appease or quell. When all else had failed, Mr. Gales bethought him of trying what he could do. Driven into the thick of the crowd, in an open carriage, he suddenly appeared amongst the rioters, and, by a few plain words of remonstrance, convinced them that they could only hurt themselves by overturning the laws, that they should seek other

* Mr. Gales has since died.

modes of redress, and meantime had all better go home. They agreed to do so,— but with the condition annexed, that they should first see him home. Whereupon, loosening the horses from the carriage, they drew him, with loud acclamations, back to his house.

Such were his prospects and position for some seven years after his marriage, when, of a sudden, without any fault of his own, he was made answerable for a fact that rendered it necessary for him to flee beyond the realm of Great Britain.

As a friend to Reform, he had, in his journal, at first supported Pitt's ministry, which had set out on the same principle, but which, when the revolutionary movement in France threatened to overthrow all government, abandoned all Reform, as a thing not then safe to set about. From this change of views Mr. Gales dissented, and still advocated Reform. So, again, as to the French Revolution, not yet arrived at the atrocities which it speedily reached,— he saw no need of making war upon it. In its outset, he had, along with Fox and other Liberals, applauded it; for it then professed little but what Liberals wished to see brought about in England. He still thought it good for France, though not for his own country. Thus, moderate as he was, he was counted in the Opposition and jealously watched.

It was in the autumn of 1792, while he was gone upon a journey of business, that a King's-messenger, bearing a Secretary-of-State's warrant for the seizure of Mr. Gales's person, presented himself at his house. For this proceeding against him the following facts had given occasion. In his office was employed a printer named Richard Davison,—a very quick, capable, useful man, and therefore much trusted,— but a little wild, withal, at once with French principles and religion, with conventicles, and those seditious clubs that were then secretly organized all over the island. This person corresponded with a central club in London, and had been rash enough to write them, just then, an insurrectionary letter, setting forth revolutionary plans, the numbers, the means they could command, the supplies of arms, etc., that they were forming. This sage epistle was betrayed into the hands of the Government. The discreet Dick they might very well have hanged; but that was not worth while. From his connection with the "Register," they supposed him to be only the agent and cover for a deeper man,— its proprietor; and at the latter only, therefore, had they struck. Nothing saved him from the blow, except the casual fact of his absence in another country, and their being ignorant of the route he had taken. This his friends alone knew, and where to reach him. They did so, at once, by a courier secretly despatched; and he, on learning what awaited him at home, instead of trusting to his innocence, chose rather to trust the seas; and, making his way to the coast, took the only good security for his freedom, by putting the German Ocean between him and pursuit. He sailed for Amsterdam, where arriving, he thence made his way to Hamburg, at which city he had decided that his family should join him. To England he could return only at the cost of a prosecution; and though this would, of necessity, end in an acquittal, it was almost sure to be preceded by imprisonment, while, together, they would half-ruin him. It was plain, then, that he must at once do what he had long intended to do, go to America.

Accordingly, he gave directions to his family to come to him, and to Montgomery that he should dispose of all his effects and settle up all his affairs. These offices that devoted friend performed most faithfully; remitting him the proceeds. The newspaper he himself bought and continued, under the name of the "Sheffield Iris." Still retaining his affection for the family, he passed into the household of what was left of them, and supplied to the three sisters of the elder Joseph Gales the place of a brother, and, wifeless and childless, lived on to a very advanced age, content with their society alone. The last of these dames died only a few months ago.

At Hamburg, whence they were to take ship for the United States, the family were detained all the winter by the delicate health of Mrs. Gales. This delay her husband put to profit, by mastering two things likely to be needful to him, — the German tongue and the art of short-hand. In the spring, they sailed for Philadelphia. Arrived there, he sought and at once obtained employment as a printer. It was soon perceived, not only that he was an admirable workman, but every way a man of unusual merit, and able to turn his hand to almost anything. By-and-by, reporters of Congressional debates being few and very indifferent, his employer, Claypole, said to him, — "You seem able to do everything that is wanted: pray, could you not do these Congressional Reports for us better than this drunken Callender, who gives us so much trouble?" Mr. Gales replied, with his usual modesty, that he did not know what he could do, but that he would try.

The next day, he attended the sitting of Congress, and brought away, in time for the compositors, a faithful transcript of such speeches as had been made. Appearing in the next morning's paper, it of course greatly astonished everybody. It seemed a new era in such things. They had heard of the like in Parliament, but had scarcely credited it. Claypole himself was the most astonished of all. Seizing a copy, he ran around the town, showing it to all he met, and still hardly comprehending the wonder which he himself had instigated. It need hardly be said that here was something far more profitable for Mr. Gales than type-setting.

But to apply this skill, possessed by none else, to the exclusive advantage of a journal of his own was yet more inviting; and the opportunity soon offering itself, he became the purchaser of the "Independent Gazetteer," a paper already established. This he conducted with success until the year 1799, making both reputation and many friends. Among the warmest of these were some of the North Carolina members, and especially that one whose name has ever since stood as a sort of proverb of honesty, Nathaniel Macon. By the representations of these friends, he was led to believe that their new State capital, Raleigh, where there was only a very decrepit specimen of journalism, would afford him at once a surer competence and a happier life than Philadelphia. Coming to this conclusion, he disposed of his newspaper and printing-office, and removed to Raleigh, where he at once established the "Register." Of his late paper, the "Gazetteer," we shall soon follow the fortunes to Washington, where it became the "Intelligencer": meantime, we must finish what is left to tell of his own.

At Raleigh he arrived under auspices which gave him not only a reputation, but friends, to set out with. Both he soon confirmed and augmented. By the constant merit of his journal, its sober sense, its moderation, and its integrity, he won and invariably maintained the confidence of all on that side of politics with which he concurred, (the old Republican,) and scarcely less conciliated the respect of his opponents. He quickly obtained, for his skill, and not merely as a partisan reward, the public printing of his State, and retained it until, reaching the ordinary limit of human life, he withdrew from the press. In the just and kindly old commonwealth which he so long served, it would have been hard for any party, no matter how much in the ascendant, to move anything for his injury. For the love and esteem which he had the faculty of attracting from the first deepened, as he advanced in age, into an absolute reverence the most general for his character and person; and the good North State honored and cherished no son of her own loins more than she did Joseph Gales. In Raleigh, there was no figure that, as it passed, was greeted so much by the signs of a peculiar veneration as that great, stalwart one of his, looking so plain and unaffected, yet with a sort of nobleness in its very simplicity, a gentleness in its strength, an inborn

goodness and courtesy in all its roughness of frame,—his countenance mild and calm, yet commanding, thoughtful, yet pleasant, and betokening a bosom that no low thought had ever entered. You had in him, indeed, the highest image of that stanch old order from which he was sprung, and might have said, "Here's the soul of a baron in the body of a peasant." For he really looked, when well examined, like all the virtues done in roughcast.

With him the age of necessary and of well-merited repose had now come; and judging that he could attain it only by quitting that habitual scene of business where it would still solicit him, he transferred his newspaper, his printing-office, and the bookstore which he had made their adjunct in Raleigh, as in Sheffield, to his third son, Weston; and removed to Washington, in order to pass the close of his days near two of the dearest of his children,—his son Joseph and his daughter Mrs. Seaton,—from whom he had been separated the most.

In renouncing all individual aims, Mr. Gales fell not into a mere life of meditation, but sought its future pleasures in the adoption of a scheme of benevolence, to the calm prosecution of which he might dedicate his declining powers, so long as his advanced age should permit. A worthy object for such efforts he recognized in the plan of African colonization, and of its affairs he accepted and almost to his death sustained the management in chief; achieving not less, by his admirable judgment, the warm approval and thanks of that wide-spread association, than, by the most amiable virtues of private life, winning in Washington, as he had done everywhere else, from all that approached him, a singular degree of deference and affection.

But the close of this long career of honor and of usefulness was now at hand. In 1839, he lost the wife whose tenderness had cheered the labors and whose gay intelligence had brightened the leisure of his existence. She had lived the delight of that intimate society to which she had confined faculties that would have adorned any circle whatever; and she died lamented in proportion by it, and by the only others to whom she was much known,—the poor. Her husband survived her but two years,—expiring at his son's house in Raleigh, where he was on a visit, in April, 1841, at the age of eighty. He died as calm as a child, in the placid faith of a true Christian.

Still telling his story in the order of dates, the writer would now turn to the younger Joseph Gales. As we have seen, he arrived in this country when seven years old, and went to Raleigh about six years afterwards. There he was placed in a school, where he made excellent progress,—profiting by the recollection of his earlier lessons, received from that best of all elementary teachers, a mother of well-cultivated mind. His boyhood, as usual, prefigured the mature man: it was diligent in study, hilarious at play; his mind bent upon solid things, not the showy. For all good, just, generous, and kindly things he had the warmest impulse and the truest perceptions. Quick to learn and to feel, he was slow only of resentment. Never was man born with more of those lacteals of the heart which secrete the milk of human kindness. Of the classic tongues, he can be said to have learnt only the Latin: the Greek was then little taught in any part of our country. For the Positive Sciences he had much inclination; since it is told, among other things, that he constructed instruments for himself, such as an electrical machine, with the performances of which he much amazed the people of Raleigh. Meantime he was forming at home, under the good guidance there, a solid knowledge of all those fine old authors whose works make the undegenerate literature of our language and then constituted what they called Polite Letters. With these went hand in hand, at that time, in the academies of the South, a profane amusement of the taste. In short, our sinful youth were fond of stage-plays, and even wickedly enacted them,

instead of resorting to singing-schools. Joseph Gales the younger had his boyish emulation of Roscius and Garrick, and performed "top parts" in a diversity of those sad comedies and merry tragedies which boys are apt to make, when they get into buskins. But it must be said, that, as a theatric star, he presently waxed dim before a very handsome youth, a little his senior, who just then had entered his father's office. He was not only a printer, but had already been twice an editor, — last, in the late North Carolina capital, Halifax, — previously, in the great town of Petersburg, — and was bred in what seemed to Raleigh a mighty city, Richmond; in addition to all which strong points of reputation, he came of an F. F. V., and had been taught by the celebrated Ogilvie, of whom more anon. He was familiar with theatres, and had not only seen, but even criticized the great actors. He outshone his very brother-in-law and colleague that was to be. For this young gentleman was William Seaton.

Meantime, Joseph, too, had learnt the paternal art, — how well will appear from a single fact. About this time, his father's office was destroyed by fire, and with it the unfinished printing of the Legislative Journals and Acts of the year. Time did not allow waiting for new material from Philadelphia. Just in this strait, he that had of old been so inauspicious, Dick Davison, came once more into play, — but, this time, not as a marplot. He, strange to say, was at hand and helpful. For, after his political exploit, abandoning England in disgust at the consequences of his Gunpowder Plot, he, too, had not only come to America, but had chanced to set up his "type-stick" in the neighboring town of Warrenton, where, having flourished, he was now the master of a printing-office and the conductor of a newspaper. Thither, then, young Joseph was despatched, "copy" in hand. Richard — really a worthy man, after all — gladly atoned for his ancient hurtfulness, by lending his type and presses; and, falling to work with great vigor, our young Faust, with his own hands, put into type and printed off the needful edition of the Laws.

He had also, by this time, as an important instrument of his intended profession, attained the art of stenography. When, soon after, he began to employ it, he rapidly became an excellent reporter; and eventually, when he had grown thoroughly versed in public affairs, confessedly the best reporter that we ever had.

He was now well-prepared to join in the manly strife of business or politics. His father chose, therefore, at once to commit him to himself. He judged him mature enough in principles, strong enough in sense; and feared lest, by being kept too long under guidance and the easy life of home, he should fall into inertness. He first sent him to Philadelphia, therefore, to serve as a workman with Birch and Small; after which, he made for him an engagement on the "National Intelligencer," as a reporter, and sent him to Washington, in October, 1807.

To that place, changing its name to the one just mentioned, the father's former paper, "The Gazetteer," had been transferred by his old associate, Samuel Harrison Smith. Its first issue there (tri-weekly) was on the 31st of October, 1800, under the double title of "The National Intelligencer and Washington Advertiser." The latter half of the title seems to have been dropped in 1810, when its present senior came, for a time, into its sole proprietorship.

More than twice the age of any other journal now extant there, — for the "Globe" came some thirty, the "Union" some forty-five years later, — the "Intelligencer" has long stood, in every worthy sense, the patriarch of our metropolitan press. It has witnessed the rise and fall around it of full a hundred competitors, — many of them declared enemies; not a few, what was more dangerous far, professed friends. Yet, in the face of all enmity and of such friendship, it has ever held on its calm way, never deserting the public cause, — as little extreme in its opposition as in its support of those in

power; so that its foes never forgot it, when they prevailed, but its friends repeatedly. To estimate the value of its influence, during its long career, would be impossible,—so much of right has it brought about, so much of wrong defeated.

Though it came hither with our Congress, a newspaper had once before been set up here,—either upon the expectation created by the laying of certain corner-stones, in 1792, that the Government would fix itself at this spot, or through an odd local faith in the dreams of some ancient visionary dwelling hard by, who had, many years before, foretold this as the destined site of a great imperial city, a second Rome, and so had bestowed upon Goose Creek the name of Tiber, long before this was Washington. The founder of this Pre-Adamite journal was Mr. Benjamin Moore; its name, "The Washington Gazette"; its issue, semi-weekly; its annual price, four dollars; and the two leading principles which, in that day of the infancy of political "platforms," his salutatory announced, were, first, "to obtain a living for himself," and, secondly, "to amuse and inform his fellow-mortals." How long this day-star of our journalism shone, before night again swallowed up the premature dawn, cannot now be stated. It must have been published at what was then expected to be our city, but is our penitentiary, Greenleaf's Point.

To the "Intelligencer" young Mr. Gales brought such vigor, such talent, and such skill in every department, that within two years, in 1809, he was admitted by Mr. Smith into partnership; within less than a year from which date, that gentleman, grown weary of the laborious life of the press, was content to withdraw and leave him sole proprietor, editor, and reporter. An enormous worker, however, it mattered little to him what tasks were to be assumed: he could multiply himself among them, and suffice for all.

In thus assuming the undivided charge of the paper, the young editor thought it becoming to set forth one main principle, that has, beyond a question, been admirably the guide of his public life: he said to his readers,—"It is the dearest right, and ought to be cherished as the proudest prerogative of a freeman, to be guided by the unbiassed convictions of his own judgment. This right it is my firm purpose to maintain, and to preserve inviolate the independence of the print now committed into my hands." Never was pledge more universally made or more rarely kept than this.

It was towards the close of Mr. Jefferson's Presidency that Mr. Gales had entered the office of the "Intelligencer"; and it was during Mr. Madison's first year that he became joint-editor of that paper. Of these Administrations it had been the supporter,—only following, in that regard, the transmitted politics of its original, the "Gazetteer," derived from the elder Mr. Gales. Bred in these, the son had learnt them of his sire, just as he had adopted his religion or his morals. Sprung from one who had been persecuted in England as a Republican, it was natural that the son should love the faith for which an honored parent had suffered.

The high qualities and the strong abilities of the young editor did not fail to strike the discerning eye of President Madison, who speedily gave him his affection and confidence. To that Administration the "Intelligencer" stood in the most intimate and faithful relations,—sustaining its policy as a necessity, where it might not have been a choice. During the entire course of the war, the "Intelligencer" sustained most vigorously all the measures needful for carrying it on with efficiency; and it did equally good service in reanimating, whenever it had slackened at any disaster, the drooping spirit of our people. Nor did its editors, when there were two, stop at these proofs of sincerity, nor slink, when danger drew near, from that hazard of their own persons to which they had stirred up the country. When invasion came, they at once took to arms, as volunteer common-soldiers, went to meet the enemy, and remained in the field until he had fallen back to the coast. And during the inva-

sion of Washington, moreover, their establishment was attacked and partially destroyed, through an unmanly spirit of revenge on the part of the British forces.

In October, 1812, proposing to himself the change of his paper into a daily one, as was accordingly brought about on the first of January ensuing, Mr. Gales invited Mr. Seaton, who had by this time become his brother-in-law, to come and join him. He did so; and the early tie of youthful friendship, which had grown between them at Raleigh, and which the new relation had drawn still closer, gradually matured into that more than friendship or brotherhood, that oneness and identity of all purposes, opinions, and interests which has ever since existed between them, without a moment's interruption, and has long been, to those who understood it, a rare spectacle of that concord and affection so seldom witnessed, and could never have come about except between men of singular virtues.

The same year that brought Gales and Seaton together as partners in business witnessed an alliance of a more interesting character; for it was in 1813 that Mr. Gales married the accomplished daughter of Theodorick Lee, younger brother of that brilliant soldier of the Revolution, the "Legionary Harry."

But, at this natural point, the writer must go back for a while, in order to bring down the story of William Seaton to where, uniting with his associate's, the two thus flow on in a single stream.

He was born January 11th, 1785, on the paternal estate in King William County, Virginia, one of a family of four sons and three daughters. At the good old mansion passed his childhood. There, too, according to what was then the wont in Virginia, he trod the first steps of learning, under the guidance of a domestic tutor, a decayed gentleman, old and bedridden; for the only part left him of a genteel inheritance was the gout. But when it became necessary to send his riper progeny abroad, for more advanced studies, Mr. Seaton very justly bethought him of going along with them; and so betook himself, with his whole family, to Richmond, where he was the possessor of houses enough to afford him a good habitation and a genteel income. Here, then, along with his brothers and sisters, William was taught, through an ascending series of schools, until, at last, he arrived at what was the wonder of that day,—the academy of Ogilvie, the Scotchman. He, be it noted, had an earldom, (that of Finlater,) which slept while its heir was playing pedagogue in America: a strange mixture of the ancient rhapsodist with the modern strolling actor, of the lord with him who lives by his wits. Scot as he was, he was better fitted to teach anything rather than common sense. The writer must not give the idea, however, that there was in Lord Ogilvie anything but eccentricity to derogate from the honors of either his lineage or his learning. A very solid teacher he was not. A great enthusiast by nature, and a master of the whole art of discoursing finely of even those things which he knew not well, he dazzled much, pleased greatly, and obtained a high reputation; so that, if he did not regularly inform or discipline the minds of his pupils, he probably made them, to an unusual degree, amends on another side: he infused into them, by the glitter of his accomplishments, a high admiration for learning and for letters. Certainly, the number of his scholars that arrived at distinction was remarkable; and this is, of course, a fact conclusive of great merit of some sort as a teacher, where, as in his case, the pupils were not many. Without pausing to mention others of them who arrived at honor, it may be well enough to refer to Winfield Scott, William Campbell Preston, B. Watkins Leigh, William S. Archer, and William C. Rives.

The writer does not know if it had ever been designed that young Seaton should proceed from Ogilvie's classes to the more systematic courses of a college. Possibly not. Even among the wealthy, at that time, home-education was often employed. The children of both sexes were committed to the care of private tu-

tors, usually young Scotchmen, the graduates of Glasgow, Edinburgh, or Aberdeen, sent over to the planter, upon order, along with his yearly supply of goods, by his merchant abroad. Or else the sons were sent to select private schools, like that of Ogilvie, set up by men of such abilities and scholarship as were supposed capable of performing the whole work of institutions.

At any rate, our youth, without further preparation, at about the age of eighteen, entered earnestly upon the duties of life. He fell at once into his vocation, — impelled to it, no doubt, by the ambition for letters and public affairs which the lessons of Ogilvie usually produced. Party ran high. Virginia politics, flushed with recent success, had added to the usual passions of the contest those of victory.

Into the novelties of the day our student accordingly plunged, in common with nearly all others of a like age and condition. He became, in short, a politician. Though talent of every other sort abounded, that of writing promptly and pleasingly did not. Young Seaton was found to possess this, and therefore soon obtained leave to exercise it as assistant-editor of one of the Richmond journals. He had already made himself acquainted with the art of printing, in an office where he became the companion and friend of the late Thomas Ritchie, and it is more than probable that many of his youthful "editorials" were "set up" by his own hands. Attaining by degrees a youthful reputation, he received an invitation to take the sole charge of a respectable paper in Petersburg, "The Republican," the editor and proprietor of which, Mr. Thomas Field, was about to leave the country for some months. Acquitting himself here with great approval, he won an invitation to a still better position, — that of the proprietary editorship of the "North Carolina Journal," published at Halifax, the former capital of that State, and the only newspaper there. He accepted the offer, and became the master of his own independent journal. Of its being so he proceeded at once to give his patrons a somewhat decisive token. They were chiefly Federalists; it was a region strongly Federal; and the gazette itself had always maintained the purest Federalism: but he forthwith changed its politics to Republican.

There can be no doubt that he who made a change so manly conducted his paper with spirit. Yet he must have done it also with that wise and winning moderation and fairness which have since distinguished him and his associate. William Seaton could never have fallen into anything of the temper or the taste, the morals or the manners, which are now so widely the shame of the American press; he could never have written in the ill spirit of mere party, so as to wound or even offend the good men of an opposite way of thinking. The inference is a sure one from his character, and is confirmed by what we know to have happened during his editorial career among the Federalists of Halifax. Instead of his paper's losing ground under the circumstances just mentioned, it really gained so largely and won so much the esteem of both sides, that, when he desired to dispose of it, in order to seek a higher theatre, he easily sold the property for double what it had cost him.

It was now that he made his way to Raleigh, the new State-capital, and became connected with the "Register." Nor was it long before this connection was drawn yet closer by his happy marriage with the lady whose virtues and accomplishments have so long been the modest, yet shining ornament and charm of his household and of the society of Washington. After this union, he continued his previous relationship with the "Register," until, as already mentioned, he came to the metropolis to join all his fortunes with those of his brother-in-law. From this point, of course, their stories, like their lives, become united, and merge, with a rare concord, into one. They have had no bickerings, no misunderstanding, no difference of view which a consultation did not at once reconcile; they have nev-

er known a division of interests; from their common coffer each has always drawn whatever he chose; and, down to this day, there has never been a settlement of accounts between them. What facts could better attest not merely a singular harmony of character, but an admirable conformity of virtues?

The history of the "Intelligencer" has, as to all its leading particulars, been for fifty years spread before thousands of readers, in its continuous diary. To rechronicle any part of what is so well known would be idle in the extreme. Of the editors personally, their lives, since they became mature and settled, have presented few events such as are not common to all men, — little of vicissitude, beyond that of pockets now full and now empty, — nothing but a steady performance of duty, an exertion, whenever necessary, of high ability, and the gradual accumulation through these of a deeply felt esteem among all the best and wisest of the land. Amidst the many popular passions with which nearly all have, in our country, run wild, they have maintained a perpetual and sage moderation; amidst incessant variations of doctrine, they have preserved a memory and a conscience; in the frequent fluctuations of power, they have steadily checked the alternate excesses of both parties; and they have never given to either a factious opposition or a merely partisan support. Of their journal it may be said, that there has, in all our times, shone no such continual light on public affairs, there has stood no such sure defence of whatever was needful to be upheld. Tempering the heats of both sides, — re-nationalizing all spirit of section, — combating our propensity to lawlessness at home and aggression abroad, — spreading constantly on each question of the day a mass of sound information, — the venerable editors have been, all the while, a power and a safety in the land, no matter who were the rulers. Neither party could have spared an opposition so just or a support so well-measured. Thus it cannot be deemed an American exaggeration to declare the opinion as to the influence of the "Intelligencer" over our public counsels, that its value is not easily to be overrated.

Never, meantime, was authority wielded with less assumption. The "Intelligencer" could not, of course, help being aware of the weight which its opinions always carried among the thinking; but it has never betrayed any consciousness of its influence, unless in a ceaseless care to deserve respect. Its modesty and candor, its fairness and courtesy have been invariable; nor less so, its observance of that decorum and those charities which constitute the very grace of all public life.

From the time of their coming together, down to the year 1820, Gales and Seaton were the exclusive reporters, as well as editors, of their journal, — one of them devoting himself to the Senate, and the other to the House of Representatives. Generally speaking, they published only running reports, — on special occasions, however, giving the speeches and proceedings entire. In those days they had seats of honor assigned to them directly by the side of the presiding officers, and over the snuff-box, in a quiet and familiar manner, the topics of the day were often discussed. To the privileges they then enjoyed, but more especially to their sagacity and industry, are we now indebted, as a country, for their "Register of Debates," which, with the "Intelligencer," has become a most important part of our national history. As in their journal nearly all the most eminent of American statesmen have discussed the affairs of the country, so have they been the direct means of preserving many of the speeches which are now the acknowledged ornaments of our political literature. Had it not been for Mr. Gales, the great intellectual combat between Hayne and Webster, for example, would have passed into a vague tradition, perhaps. The original notes of Mr. Webster's speech, now in Mr. Gales's library, form a volume of several hundred pages, and, having been corrected and interlined by the statesman's own

hand, present a treasure that might be envied. At the period just alluded to, Mr. Gales had given up the practice of reporting any speeches, and it was a mere accident that led him to pay Mr. Webster the compliment in question. That it was appreciated was proved by many reciprocal acts of kindness and the long and happy intimacy that existed between the two gentlemen, ending only with the life of the statesman. It was Mr. Webster's opinion, that the abilities of Mr. Gales were of the highest order; and yet the writer has heard of one instance in which even the editor could not get along without a helping hand. Mr. Gales had for some days been engaged upon the Grand Jury, and, with his head full of technicalities, entered upon the duty of preparing a certain editorial. In doing this, he unconsciously employed a number of legal phrases; and when about half through, found it necessary to come to a halt. At this juncture, he dropped a note to Mr. Webster, transmitting the unfinished article and explaining his difficulty. Mr. Webster took it in hand, finished it to the satisfaction of Mr. Gales, and it was published as editorial.

But the writer is trespassing upon private ground, and it is with great reluctance that he refrains from recording a long list of incidents which have come to his knowledge, calculated to illustrate the manifold virtues of his distinguished friends. That they are universally respected and beloved by those who know them,—that their opinions on public matters have been solicited by Secretaries of State and even by Presidents opposed to them in politics,—that their journal has done more than any other in the country to promote a healthy tone in polite literature,—that their home-life has been made happy by the influences of refinement and taste,—and that they have given away to the poor money enough almost to build a city, and to the unfortunate spoken kind words enough to fill a library, are all assertions which none can truthfully deny. If, therefore, to look back upon a long life *not uselessly spent* is what will give us peace at last, then will the evening of their days be all that they could desire; and their "silver hairs," the most appropriate crown of true patriotism,

> "Will purchase them a good opinion,
> And buy men's voices to commend their deeds."

SONNET.

WRITTEN AFTER A VIOLENT THUNDER-STORM IN THE COUNTRY.

An hour agone, and prostrate Nature lay,
Like some sore-smitten creature, nigh to death,
With feverish, pallid lips, with laboring breath,
And languid eyeballs darkening to the day;
A burning noontide ruled with merciless sway
Earth, wave, and air; the ghastly-stretching heath,
The sullen trees, the fainting flowers beneath,
Drooped hopeless, shrivelling in the torrid ray:
When, sudden, like a cheerful trumpet blown
Far off by rescuing spirits, rose the wind,
Urging great hosts of clouds; the thunder's tone
Swells into wrath, the rainy cataracts fall,—
But pausing soon, behold creation shrined
In a new birth, God's covenant clasping all!

Atlantic

THE PROFESSOR'S STORY.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SPIDER ON HIS THREAD.

THERE was nobody, then, to counsel poor Elsie, except her father, who had learned to let her have her own way so as not to disturb such relations as they had together, and the old black woman, who had a real, though limited influence over the girl. Perhaps she did not need counsel. To look upon her, one might well suppose that she was competent to defend herself against any enemy she was like to have. That glittering, piercing eye was not to be softened by a few smooth words spoken in low tones, charged with the common sentiments which win their way to maidens' hearts. That round, lithe, sinuous figure was as full of dangerous life as ever lay under the slender flanks and clean-shaped limbs of a panther.

There were particular times when Elsie was in such a mood that it must have been a bold person who would have intruded upon her with reproof or counsel. "This is one of her days," old Sophy would say quietly to her father, and he would, as far as possible, leave her to herself. These days were more frequent, as old Sophy's keen, concentrated watchfulness had taught her, at certain periods of the year. It was in the heats of summer that they were most common and most strongly characterized. In winter, on the other hand, she was less excitable, and even at times heavy and as if chilled and dulled in her sensibilities. It was a strange, paroxysmal kind of life that belonged to her. It seemed to come and go with the sunlight. All winter long she would be comparatively quiet, easy to manage, listless, slow in her motions; her eye would lose something of its strange lustre; and the old nurse would feel so little anxiety, that her whole expression and aspect would show the change, and people would say to her, "Why, Sophy, how young you're looking!"

As the spring came on, Elsie would leave the fireside, have her tiger-skin spread in the empty southern chamber next the wall, and lie there basking for whole hours in the sunshine. As the season warmed, the light would kindle afresh in her eyes, and the old woman's sleep would grow restless again,—for she knew, that, so long as the glitter was fierce in the girl's eyes, there was no trusting her impulses or movements.

At last, when the veins of the summer were hot and swollen, and the juices of all the poison-plants and the blood of all the creatures that feed upon them had grown thick and strong,—about the time when the second mowing was in hand, and the brown, wet-faced men were following up the scythes as they chased the falling waves of grass, (falling as the waves fall on sickle-curved beaches; the foam-flowers dropping as the grass-flowers drop,—with sharp semivowel consonantal sounds,—*frsh*,—for that is the way the sea talks, and leaves all pure vowel-sounds for the winds to breathe over it, and all mutes to the unyielding earth,)—about this time of over-ripe midsummer, the life of Elsie seemed fullest of its malign and restless instincts. This was the period of the year when the Rockland people were most cautious of wandering in the leafier coverts which skirted the base of The Mountain, and the farmers liked to wear thick, long boots, whenever they went into the bushes. But Elsie was never so much given to roaming over The Mountain as at this season; and as she had grown more absolute and uncontrollable, she was as like to take the night as the day for her rambles.

At this season, too, all her peculiar tastes in dress and ornament came out in a more striking way than at other times. She was never so superb as then, and never so threatening in her scowling beauty. The barred skirts she always

PN
4900
N3N3

The National Intelligencer and its editors

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY